

MINUTES

WILLMAR POLICE COMMISSION

Wednesday, September 3, 2014

A meeting of the Willmar Police Civil Service Commission was held on Wednesday, September 3, 2014. Members present were: President Dennis Anfinson, Vice President Cassie Akerson, and Secretary Kathy Schwantes. City Administrator Charlene Stevens, Police Chief Jim Felt and Administrative Assistant Sue Edwards were also present.

The meeting was called to order by President Anfinson at 3:48 p.m.

A motion was made by Commissioner Akerson, seconded by Commissioner Schwantes, to approve the May 20, 2014 minutes as submitted. **Motion carried.**

Chief Felt explained to the Commission that he had received approval from City Administrator Stevens to fill the Captain's position. He said there are five sergeants eligible to test, and he would like to see the position filled sometime in November. Chief Felt recommended PDI (Personnel Decisions International) as the testing company, using an in-basket type test.

Discussion followed on the testing process for the Captain's promotional exam. Commissioner Schwantes made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Akerson, to authorize Chief Felt to proceed with the Police Captain promotional process by accepting letters of interest and résumés from eligible sergeants within the Willmar Police Department, with the weighted score for the testing process consisting of a 40% value given to the written portion and a 60% value given to the oral portion. **Motion carried.**

The written test will be selected by Chief Felt, and the Commission will meet again after the written test results are back to decide on cut-off scores for oral interviews.

Miscellaneous

Chief Felt updated the Commission on some of the internal changes within the Police Department. He explained that Sgt. Mike Anderson had been assigned to the Community Resource Sergeant position in June, after Sgt. Julie Asmus' retirement. With Officer Craig Lange being promoted to Sergeant in June, it vacated a position on the Gang Enforcement Team (GET), which was filled by Officer Mike Holme in August. In anticipation of filling the Captain's position in November from the existing Sergeant pool, a new sergeant would be appointed at that time. The Chief explained that the next name on the eligibility list is Detective Chad Nelson, which would leave an opening in the Detective Unit. Officer Dustin Van der Hagen will be assigned to the Detective unit in September for field training, which will leave another position open in the GET unit. This position would be filled once the department is up to full sworn staff of 32 officers.

Chief Felt explained that background investigations are currently being done to fill the existing police officer position, once the two newest officers have completed their Field Training programs and are assigned to the road. He updated the Commission on the performance of the new officers (Jeff Liebl and Marco Vazquez).

Discussion followed on the Community Service Officer/Apprentice positions through Ridgewater College. Chief Felt inquired if there's a possibility in future hirings to give some type of preference points to former/current Willmar Community Service Officers in good standing. Discussed ways to help mentor the CSO's to better prepare them for the hiring process.

Chief Felt informed the Commission that the Police Department is looking at starting a Law Enforcement Explorer Program through Boy Scouts of America. He feels it's a good educational tool to teach young adults, ages 14 to 20, about law enforcement. The Police Union is willing to help out with some of the start-up costs, and the Explorers will be responsible for raising their own money for uniforms, etc. He's looking at a potential start date of sometime in January 2015.

Chief Felt explained that the Police Department has been without a canine unit since 2012, and there are a couple of donors who are willing to cover the cost of re-starting the program. This would be a joint canine program with the Police Department and the Sheriff's Office sharing the costs. They would like to focus on a dog used for drugs and tracking, that is also good with the public for speaking engagements. At this time they are waiting to hear when schools/training will be offered. Commissioner Schwantes wanted the Chief to convey to the donors that they have been very patient waiting for this program to get up and running.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Akerson, seconded by Commissioner Schwantes. Meeting was adjourned at 4:37 p.m.

Secretary Kathy Schwantes
by Sue Edwards